



The Spark



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Mobilise against the Eskom electricity scam

Contents

1. Editorial- Syria, Mali, on the killing of immigrants, State of the Nation, the rape by capitalism on the masses, graduate tax
2. Mobilise against the Eskom electricity scam
3. Letter of support to the Amplats workers
4. Farmworkers- towards an immediate programme of action
5. Emerging farmer or submerging farmer?
6. The Housing crisis- the case of East London
7. The prison revolt in Groenpunt
8. *The Internationale*



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Editorial

Syria and torture

The February issue 2013 of Globalizing Torture- CIA Secret Extraordinary Rendition (of the Open Society Justice Initiative) reports that 54 countries have worked with the CIA to kidnap and facilitate (in many cases carry out) torture of anyone whom US imperialism deems to be a threat. These include Syria, Gaddafi's Libya, Algeria and South Africa.

Thus the daily massacres of the masses which the Assad regime carries out are a partnership of the Assad regime with US imperialism. Many on the left need to do introspection of their support of Assad claiming that he is fighting 'imperialism'. In fact Imperialism backs Assad and has attempted to hijack the struggle of the masses through the SNC (Syrian National Council/Coalition). Victory to the Syrian masses against Assad and the SNC!

Mali

Why did imperialism consider it necessary to send French troops to invade Mali from the south and US-backed Al Qaeda into the north, while French imperialism allows its rival, US imperialism, to set up a drone base in its area of control, Niger?

After the fall of the Gaddafi regime, a section of the Tuareg who had fought against it, headed south, arms in hand from the Libyan arsenals. [it was not only Tuareg forces that fought on the side of Gaddafi, it turns out that a section either directly fought against his regime and/or defected in the last days]. Although many of the Tuareg had been nomads, in recent years they had been largely proletarianised, having to sell their labour power to the capitalists operating in the region. Thus the overthrow of imperialist puppet regimes in the north of Africa, was spreading south. The Tuareg are spread across Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Libya. This was not just a fight to overthrow the Mali regime but a fight that threatened all these regimes. This is why, in effect, there is a united front of imperialism against the masses in the region.

When the masses rose in the north of Mali and the revolution was moving south, imperialism quickly staged a military coup against the Mali regime. The UN, its Human Rights Council, the AU and the SA government all recognize the coup 'government', claiming that the fight is really against Al Qaeda in the north. But who is being killed? Is it really the 'islamists' or is the real target the Mali masses, of whom 400 000 have been destabilised and displaced.

To give respectability to the imperialist attack on the masses, the French 'Socialist' government is leading the invasion to crush the Mali masses. Imperialism is desperate to halt the spread of the overthrow of their puppet regimes in the region. Imperialism is desperate for a return to 'capitalist stability' because revolutionary mass action to topple capitalist regimes may spread to the imperialist centres. What if tomorrow the Greek masses decide to take up arms to overthrow their regime? If the masses in Mali succeed in toppling their regime, then every regime in West Africa and Algeria could be next. Even on an international scale, if the Mali masses succeed then Russia, China, India, USA,



Germany, Japan could all face increased revolts from the masses on home soil. That is why imperialism forms a united front against the Mali revolution. They paint it as a fight against 'Islamists' to divide the masses and to hide the revolt of the impoverished masses from the eyes of the world working class.

How was Al Qaeda and the Salafists able to sideline the popular revolt against the Mali regime and take over leadership? They were funded and armed by imperialism. The selection by imperialism of the Salafists and Al Qaeda is deliberate- it bases itself on the factor that in this region, many of the masses are Muslim; also the Muslim capitalists have shown, as they have done in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere that they are willing to use extreme methods to crush and terrorise the masses. The outstretched hand of Obama to Africa is not freedom, but terror, drones and more capitalist dictatorship.

Another key factor in the imperialist strategy to suppress the masses in Mali and surrounds, is that the regimes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya are still under threat by the masses. The masses are on the march, saying that those who fell in the right against the old regimes, died for nothing.

We condemn the imperialist French bombing in Mali- US and French imperialism have divided up the country to prevent the masses from rising up and overthrowing the regime- this is imperialism's strategy to prevent the world uprising against capitalist regimes from spreading- how can French imperialism be the bearer of freedom and democracy? Just ask the families of the 3 million killed in Algeria by the French Legion when it was still a direct colony of France. We also condemn the complicity of the AU and SA govt for condoning these attacks- for armed worker and poor peasant committees in the entire Mali to fight the US- backed Al Qaeda in the north and the French backed regime in the south. The SA govt claim they are against coups (when they arrested 19 militia in Limpopo who they claimed were involved in an attempted coup of the DRC), however, the current regime in south Mali came to power in a coup, yet the SA government is silent on them. The current DRC regime is a puppet of US imperialism.

The ANC government is showing that it is a puppet of imperialism. For revolutionary working class parties across Africa as part of a revolutionary International.

For a federation of Socialist states based on workers councils of north and West Africa. For the right of self-determination of the Tuareg.

On the police killing of immigrant workers in South Africa

There is a pattern of the police killing African immigrants- this part of the deliberate strategy of imperialism to sow divisions among the working class. On Monday 14th January 2013 a Lesotho worker, Letsekang Tokhwane, was killed by the police in De Doorns, and just a few days before, on the 6th January a Nigerian worker, Obinna Chinatu Ugboaja, died at the hands of the police. We called for support for the march to parliament on the 18th January- workers of the world unite- we have a common enemy- world imperialism capitalism. Police claimed they were acting against criminals but the biggest criminals are the bosses of Anglo American and monopoly capitalists- they plunder Africa with the help of the local regimes while the masses are kept in starvation.



SA- home for terror trials of imperialism?

The SA government is now putting on trial alleged terror suspects for acts in Nigeria. Will the SA regime now arrest Obama for the terror acts of drones killing innocent children in Afghanistan and Pakistan? Will Bush, Blair, Netanyahu and their commanders and ex-commanders be arrested and put on trial for their acts of terror against the masses? No. This shows that the 'terror trials' have nothing to do with defence of the masses but shows yet again that the ANC regime is a puppet of imperialism, acting in the final analysis as its agent against the poor, against the masses.

The State of the Nation Address 14 Feb 2013

The ANC President's State of the Nation address shows that the love affair between imperialism and the ANC leaders is central to the government. The ANC openly declares its partnership with the US, EU and Japan, ie with the major banks and corporates from these countries.

How ironic that on this very day it was announced that Zimplats was found to have stolen over \$300 million through mislabelling of exports(ie smuggling wealth out of the country by declaring exports at far below their market price) and that the Zimbabwe regime was expropriating all the land around Zimplats and other mines. Of course this is to serve the elite in Zimbabwe but also shows the deep crisis that the regime faces there. The same US banks that control Zimplats also control Implats, Anglo American and Lonmin. If Zimplats was stealing \$300 million then Anglo American and other mining giants must have been stealing trillions of dollars in wealth. [This is confirmed by research which we have submitted to the Times and the Mail and Guardian, but they have deliberately suppressed publication of the theft of trillions by the mining bosses over the past 40 years at least]. Here are the funds for decent housing for all, quality, free healthcare and education for all, for employment at a living wage for all. The ANC ignores all of this and vaguely talks of a new mining tax, in other words they ignore all the past theft by Anglo American and the US banks that back it. The ANC admits they met the head of Anglo American- thus we can assume that they have given the stamp of approval to the ANC current and future plans. The ANC calls on Anglo American, the most corrupt company in the region, the one who has stolen the most from the masses, to help in the fight against corruption!

Since 2009 over R860 bn was spent on infrastructure under the 'National Development plan' (or call it the 'New Growth Path', it is in essence the same plan). Yet despite all these billions spent, millions still live in shacks and small overcrowded dwellings- the pace of 'housing' construction is so slow that homelessness will always grow and will never be eradicated. This shows that the multi trillion Rand plan is not to meet the needs of the masses but is really a cash cow for the US banks, Anglo American and other capitalist gangsters.

Once again the demands of the masses are postponed to 2030. We can be sure, by 2030, they will postpone it again by another 30 years.

Only R47bn goes to renewable energy, ie only 5% of the total infrastructure spend. This is to cover that most is going to coal and nuclear power that will destroy the environment and enslave the masses in debt for centuries.

Here we see the real meaning of the National Health Insurance (promoted by the 'left' as an advance in health care)- private medical staff will be co-opted to serve clinics in a pilot project. This is privatization of public health and shows, as we have been warning, that the NHI is to open up the



public health sector to profiteering by the capitalists (the private sector). By 2014 millions of workers will face an extra 10% tax to be able to be seen by private doctors.

Several billions are earmarked to Chinese capitalists of the Chinese Communist party for locomotives, the same agency that delivered such poor stock to Namibia that within weeks all the locomotives had to be withdrawn from service.

The ANC claims tourism as the main driver of job creation- just imagine 11 million more smiling tour guides by 2030- this is the grand plan of the government for the future of our youth.

The ANC government claims that its priority will be the 'emerging farmer' and the black capitalist, in other words, a small handful will take a bribe while the government ensures that the rape by Anglo American of the resources and the masses continues. Every sector is controlled by monopoly capitalism. Thus any 'emerging' capitalist will be totally dependent on the rich.

The government claims that people are living longer- we dispute that- go into any of the ex-bantustan areas and see for yourself how the masses are dying like flies.

The drones in Niger and the French invasion in Mali is part of the same world strategy of imperialism to try and destroy any resistance to its rule. In this context, the capitalists have now signalled that the protests on the mines, transport and on the farms last year will not be tolerated again. Thus the Harvard advisors to the ANC are signalling through this State of the nation speech that no more 'violent' protests will be tolerated. The same security cluster that must have given the instruction for the special police forces to gather in Marikana to massacre the mine workers, have now been given the green light to crackdown on the masses and the activists in the working class movement. Anglo American can continue to steal but no resistance to it will be tolerated henceforth. Desperate measures for a regime in crisis.

Imperialism are no fools, while they support the ANC to the hilt, they are preparing and sponsoring reserve forces to hijack and mislead the struggle, from Mamphela's new party to a possible reformist labour party in SA. Thus the FNB ad campaign calling for people to rise up on a capitalist basis. Barclays was the first to meet the ANC in the last days of the apartheid regime and now they signal that when the masses break from the ANC, they want to be in control of any of the new forces. Imperialism supported Gaddafi and when he could no longer control the masses they dumped him and created and supported the TNC. Imperialism does not care if the ANC leaders meet the same end as Gaddafi, as long as they are in control of any new horse that shows itself capable of controlling the masses.

The central task of the moment is the creation of a revolutionary working class party on national, regional and international basis. Without this the heroic struggles of the masses will most likely be ultimately defeated. We call on revolutionaries to work on a programme for such a party, while at the same time joining hands in a united front on current class issues facing the working class.

Capitalism sustains the attacks on women and girls

How can Popcru say the police are doing enough for the brutal rape and murder of Anene Booysen- how many times, all over the region are the poor raped but the very members of Popcru do not turn up (there are a few who do)- systemically, the police are there not to protect the masses but to protect big capital so their exploitation of the resources and the masses can permanently continue. If the masses go out and arm themselves, set up self-defence committees to patrol the streets ourselves,



then the police clamp down on us, saying that this is illegal.

The very degradation of the masses through unemployment, slave wages, overcrowded conditions, while untold wealth is carried off by Anglo American and other capitalists, is the root cause of the rape and attacks on women and girls.

The police know where the attackers stay, they know where the druglords stay but they leave them largely untouched- why? Because capitalism requires the masses to be permanently destabilised- they do not want women to be able to freely attend meetings of resistance against the system.

We all need to fight rape and attacks on women but at the same time we must fight the system that perpetuates patriarchy, oppression and exploitation, ie capitalism. We call for the setting up of workers self defence committees in every working class area, in every street, in every workplace, mine, farm and factory. 7.2.2013

On the graduate tax

The ANC wants to tax graduates to fund 'free' education; the ANC ignores the trillions Anglo American carries off through transfer pricing, which could have abolished all homelessness, created jobs for all in Southern Africa at a living wage, free health care and free education and still have trillions left over for other development.

Those who get NSFAS funding are from the working class, the poorest of the poor. Yet the rich parents who can afford to pay the huge fees for higher education are left alone. Their children, the rich upper middle class will not have to pay an extra graduate tax upon getting a job as they would not have received state funding for their education. While the SACP leaders grow fat from their investment companies, the working class is expected to pay more for education.

Such is the policy of the SACP which is trying to build Socialism in one ministry. The ANC govt is a puppet of US imperialism. No to this attack on the working class. Expropriate Anglo American without compensation, place it under workers' control- here is the basis for free education.





Eskom increases- the ANC govt is the spear of Anglo American (the Cosatu leaders, its shield)

Around the world, industries are closing down, mass retrenchments continue apace. The major banks and monopolies of the world face a crisis of falling profits. These gangster capitalists have hatched new plans to put the burden of decline onto the backs of the working class- they have artificially increased the price of food; they increase their smuggling of raw materials out of Africa (through transfer pricing- eg Anglo American labelling Platinum as cheaper Palladium and so escaping paying tax and taking trillions of dollars in value of goods out of Africa); another mechanism is to open industries/sectors that were usually under state control and out of the capitalist market, and making commodities out of them. Examples of this, is the privatization of health and education, and of course, now, electricity.

In South Africa, since 2008, more than 1 million workers were retrenched and thousands of companies closed. The clothing and textile industry has virtually been destroyed. As companies use about 80% of total electricity, the overall usage has declined. Under the current capitalist relations, there is no prospect of mass new industries opening up. Even current housing development is so small that the extra electricity needed is negligible. Besides this, the real cost of household electricity is falling (for example, there are instant water heaters which make the need for geysers obsolete- much of current household electricity is wasted on keeping hot water in a tank that is not used for most of the day). This shows that the Eskom plan to double electricity generation within 10-15 years is a hoax- it is a cash cow for Anglo American and the major US banks that control the Southern African economy.

How Anglo American and the major US banks benefit from the coal and nuclear electricity scam

Firstly, there are such advances in solar, wind, wave and hydro electricity that coal and nuclear power stations are already historically obsolete. (*Alternative energy will no longer be alternative- The Economist* -21 Nov 2012). In other words, there is no need for any new power stations to be built based on coal and nuclear because solar power is already cheaper and its costs are falling all the time. Eskom lies about coal being cheaper to build than solar as they ignore the fuel costs- coal power stations require huge amounts of coal all the time while solar requires no fuel input as sunlight is free. Nuclear power already costs many times the cost of the most expensive solar power plant. Even in the heartland of imperialism, coal power stations are closing every day. (in the 1980's the USA was 80% dependent on coal, now they are only 33% dependent on it). Already the world solar production increased by 86% last year and is set to continue to rapidly expand.

So if there is no need for coal and nuclear power stations, why is Eskom insisting on spending trillions of Rands on it? The point is that Eskom is not an independent entity- it acts as an arm of Anglo American and the major US banks. This is so because the main beneficiaries of the Eskom scam build programme is Anglo American and the US banks:

- In 2008 (<http://www.workersinternational.org.za/blackout%20scam-who%20pays.inlversion8.03.08.doc>) we reported that Anglo American and the major corporates who were high energy users were only paying 12 cents per kWh (while the rest were paying a minimum of 44 cents). Eskom argued they had long term contracts with Anglo and others so could not increase their rate. Assuming that Anglo had to pay 25% annual increase over the past years, this still means that they currently pay less than 40 cents



per unit (while the rest pay over 113 cents per unit). Thus those who use the most electricity are being subsidized by the worker in the squatter camp, the rest of the masses and small industry.

- Anglo American has a 40 year contract to supply coal to the new Medupi power plant- a completely artificial business as there was no need for coal power plants to be built;
- JP Morgan Chase, the same bank which controls Anglo American, also controls Hitachi which won generator contracts for Medupi; the concrete for the structure was also supplied by Anglo American; the major construction companies which 'won' the build contract are also controlled by US banks.
- If the nuclear build programme goes ahead, Anglo American controls the Uranium reserves, so they will again be the major beneficiary. The cost is so huge that the generations for the next 200 years will have to pay for these costs.
- Eskom is also asking for an increase of an extra 3% to provide for 'independent power providers'- in other words, the masses are asked to subsidize capitalists to enter and make money out of electricity generation- the major beneficiary will be Anglo American and the US banks- the only ones with the scale of finance to enter this sector as a 'competitor' ;
- To add insult to injury, Eskom wants to increase their rate of profit from 0.9% to 7.8%- thus they want to increase the price of electricity so that Anglo American or its empowerment front companies can become private suppliers of electricity and make bags of profits from this.

Thus the statement by Cutifani, the head of the Chamber of Mines that they are concerned about and oppose the electricity increase, is another big lie. They lie to deflect attention of the masses from who is really responsible for this attack on the masses.

The ANC govt is the spear of Anglo American

The ANC appoints the Eskom and Nersa boards and thus is politically responsible for the attack that Eskom is launching on the masses of the region. As the main beneficiary of the Eskom scam is Anglo American and the US banks, the ANC govt acts as the spear of US imperialism. The New Growth Plan has as its centre-piece the infrastructure build programme which is focused on the coal and nuclear power station construction.

For a bribe of R3bn to the ANC-connected Chancellor House company, that also benefited out of the scam electricity programme, the ANC govt has put the masses into greater misery for generations to come. Trillions of Rands are being handed over to Anglo American and their front companies, now and for the future. The ANC govt is the spear of Anglo American- the bourgeois media, Amabhungane and Cosatu's Corruption Watch are all silent on this massive corruption by them.

The Cosatu leaders are the shield of Anglo American

Ever since the attacks on the working class through high electricity price increases began in 2008, the Cosatu leaders have not waged a real fight against it, despite the masses being willing to fight. Last year, when the increase was reduced from 25% to 15%, Cosatu leaders called it a 'victory', while millions are now living in the dark. By refusing to call consistent mass action to stop the electricity increases, the Cosatu leaders are protecting the main beneficiaries of this scam, Anglo American- that is why we say the Cosatu leaders are the shield of Anglo American. Even the economic policy of Cosatu supports the scam build programme that benefits the monopoly capitalists.

On every class battle the ANC is on the same side as the monopoly capitalists- they refuse to support even the paltry R150 a day for farm workers, they carried out the Marikana massacre to protect Anglo American and the



Lonmin bosses, they do not act against the Pick 'n Pay and other major retailers for the high price of food, the ANC govt is even demolishing houses that some people are building out of frustration with the deliberate slow pace of house construction that helps keep housing prices among the highest in the world; the ANC and DA govts are closing schools and supporting the privatization of education.

Yet in September last year, the Cosatu leaders supported, unanimously, the re-election of the same leadership of the ANC who have led the attacks on the working class.

The Numsa, Saccawu and Fawu leaders have embarked on a programme of pickets of the Nersa hearings- can they be taken seriously? These are leaders that are afraid of their own base, going through the motions so they can say they 'tried'. In their joint statement of 28th Jan 2013 they do not even challenge the principle of the coal build programme, instead they make a vague statement that coal should be brought under 'democratic control'. Under the control of the same ANC govt that is spearheading the attacks of Anglo American? that says they will defend the mining capitalists with their lives? These leaders still want the trillions to be handed over to Anglo American, they only want the govt to make longer term loans and slight improvements so that the burden is spread over a longer period.

The Cosatu investment company, Kopano ke Matla, has a joint venture with Indian company NMDC so that they share the coal earnings that fall from Anglo American's table in the Eskom scam. How can the Cosatu leaders be taken seriously if they say they 'oppose' the electricity increase? The Cosatu leaders organise symbolic action and prevent a full scale struggle against Anglo American. In fact the Cosatu leaders are already signalling a betrayal as they say that an 'inflation-related increase' of electricity is ok, in other words, they will no mobilise widely as they are signalling that a 8-12% increase is acceptable to the working class; once again they will claim that this is a 'victory' when millions live in the dark.

The Way Forward

As long as Cosatu is alliance with the ANC, the workers struggle will always be sabotaged from within by the Cosatu leaders. We could say that Anglo American rules and bullies the masses today because of the Cosatu leaders, their shield. As most Cosatu workers are now saying, the federation should break with the ANC. The SACP gives the betrayal by the ANC a 'Socialist' cover- they have failed, in fact their leaders are part of the gravy train. It is time to build a revolutionary workers party, that unites workers of Africa and the rest of the world.

- End the electricity subsidy to the monopoly capitalists, they should pay the same proportionately more, according to their use;
- Abolish profiteering by Eskom, place it under workers control; no to any privatization of electricity generation
- Free 200 units per household per month
- Expropriate Sasol, the coal and construction sector, without compensation to the capitalists, placing it under workers control;
- Cancel Medupi and force all the construction monopolies like Murray & Roberts, Group 5, etc, to repay the billions they stole through the decades through collusion with higher tenders- failing which all these giant companies should be expropriated without compensation and placed under workers control. All new electricity generation should be solar, wind or hydro and phase out coal and nuclear power
- Expropriate Anglo American, without compensation, placing it under workers' control;



- For the retraining of the geyser sector workers to build and install instant water heaters and solar powered geysers;
- For worker-controlled price committees; for an immediate reduction in the price of electricity and food;
- For workers committees (anti-Eskom/Anglo committees) to be set up at all workplaces and in all working class communities, uniting all workers, irrespective of union affiliation, whether local or immigrant, permanent or casual, employed or unemployed. These committees should organise lunchtime pickets, marches to council offices, marches to provincial government and marches to central govt offices (including the Union buildings and parliament), marches to Anglo American offices.
- Sweep out the Cosatu leaders who place the ANC ahead of workers interests;
- Prepare the way towards a general strike uniting all struggles of the masses, including the mineworkers and farm workers, until our demands are met.

1 Feb 2013 **Workers International Vanguard Party** (amended 9 Feb 2013)

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Message of support to the Amplats workers

Workers International Vanguard Party (WIVP) salutes the heroic mineworkers for taking on the mighty Anglo American bosses, the real rulers of the region, in last year. Unfortunately, the Cosatu leaders played a major role in isolating the workers revolt last year by spreading rumours that it was led by thugs who were killing off NUM shopstewards. The Cosatu leaders prevented the rest of the working class from joining ranks with the mineworkers in what was really a fight against the capitalist system.

The defence of the mineworkers lies in breaking from a unionist approach and by launching a political fight which unites other sectors of the working class in the struggle against the ANC regime which is the manager for Anglo American. One of the central issues to go forward right now, is to take up the fight against the electricity increases, as the main beneficiary is Anglo American and the US banks that own it.

Why is Anglo American targeting the Amplats workers?

The Harmony and Amplats bosses are making huge profits- with the Rand devaluing, they are making even more. So their attack on the workers is political:

The imperialist-capitalist class is concerned that independent, militant workers, not under anyone's control poses a threat to the whole capitalist system.

1. The world economy is in decline and the prospects for an expansion of the market for Platinum is limited- car sales are down internationally and there is a move away from producing catalytic converters;
2. thus one of the few ways of increasing profit levels is reducing the wage bill (retrenchments) or reducing wages or increasing the price of Platinum;
3. this makes us believe that the plan to retrench 14000 workers was calculated to provoke a strike- this had an immediate effect of raising the Platinum price by 2%- the longer any strike goes on the more the price would rise; at the same time the bosses are hoping the workers go on strike on their own so that this time they hope to carry out mass dismissals and escape paying packages, but **more importantly** the company will smash the militant core at Amplats that threatens constantly the slave relations not only in the mining sector but in the



country- we should not forget that Anglo American has its hands dripping in blood from Afghanistan and many other places- they have assessed that any further sparks from the mine workers would set the whole region alight- thus, contrary to what NUM leaders and the ANC govt say, they would all stand to benefit from having these militant workers smashed and replaced over time with more compliant and docile ones. One only has to look to the farm workers revolt, the militant truck drivers strike and the revolt in Sasolburg to glimpse the type of uprising across the board that the imperialists are trying to pre-empt by wanting to cut off the head of the resistance; The threats hanging over the heads of the Harmony and Amplats workers is to intimidate the entire working class from rising up;

4. the bosses have calculated that due to tiredness, pressure of schools re-opening, debt, that it would be very difficult for other mines to come out in solidarity strikes, hence their provocation now- hoping that workers come out on strike on their own so that this time they will really be in a position to smash the strikers;

5. Another key factor is that the independent workers committees have either collapsed or are very weak or have been taken over by Amcu which is unionist and economist that they do not see the broader picture of class struggle- indeed in places the Amcu has become the new 'NUM'.

6. Thus it is important to use the 60 day period to regain strength, mobilise on the ground and prepare the ground for an offensive at the date and time of the choosing of the workers, not the bosses, under the rallying call that if any worker is retrenched anywhere, the workers would take over the mine, the attack is part of a general one because if they succeed at Anglo, then mine by mine, others would follow.

The Way Forward

We propose that immediately there are anti-Eskom/Anglo American committees set up at all workplaces and in all working class communities. (see our leaflet on Eskom) . These committees should unite workers irrespective of union affiliation and irrespective if they are permanent or casual, local or immigrant, and in the case of communities, irrespective also of being employed or unemployed.

Such committees could begin by organising lunchtime pickets, marches to council offices, marches to provincial government and marches to central govt offices (including the Union buildings and parliament), marches to Anglo American offices. By taking up issues which face the broader working class, is a way to break the isolation of the mineworkers. . The Cosatu leaders are already preparing a betrayal by saying that an increase of 8- 12% is acceptable. The working class needs to be made aware of this.

We need to link the collusion of the construction companies over decades to this fight- the same banks that own them also own Anglo American. The Medupi project should be stopped. The entire multi-trillion Rand infrastructure programme which is centred on contracts for these corrupt construction companies should be stopped- these companies should be forced to pay back the money they stole through high tenders over the past few decades, failing which they should be expropriated without compensation and placed under workers control. All new electricity projects should be renewable energy and coal and nuclear should be phased out. Anglo American and other imperialist companies that benefit from coal power should be forced to pay compensation to the masses of Mozambique and all areas in the region who are victims of flooding due to climate change from pollution from coal power.

It is by joining hands with the rest of the working class that they will realise that the attack on the Amplats and Harmony workers is the same attack as what the capitalists launch every day on higher electricity prices, higher food prices, high housing and transport prices, etc. A working class united will never be defeated! Forward to an independent revolutionary working class party that is international! **Forward to Socialism!**

9.2.2013



Towards an immediate programme of action in defence of farm workers in the Western Cape winelands

We salute the heroic farmworkers who stood united and forced the ANC government to legislate a minimum wage of R105 per day. At each and every democratic advance it has not been the ANC that leads but the working class. At every stage the ANC stands in the way of preventing full democratic demands of workers being achieved. This is one of the central lessons to be learnt from the recent uprising on the farms in the Western Cape. R150 per day is not a lot to ask for, considering that food prices rise almost every week on the back of almost constant slave wages for farm workers. Yet the ANC government could not even legislate this measly wage.

It does not take a rocket scientist to work out that if the big retailers put up their prices every second week but farm workers' wages stay the same, that most of the massive profits on food is going to Pick 'n Pay, Shoprite, Spar and Woolworths and international retailers. These are profits made from continued slave relations on the farms. Yet the ANC government does nothing to act against them. International banks control these major retailers behind the scenes and are the ones who are really responsible for high food prices (see our article *The crisis of the banks is responsible for high food prices*). The ANC sits on the boards of the major banks that operate here- no wonder they turn a blind eye to the massive profiteering by them.

The working class and Cosatu rank and file members in particular have long been demanding that the provinces be disbanded and the wealth of the country centralised so that all areas can receive their proportionate share according to the size of the population in each area. The North West, Limpopo, Kzn, Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape are just extensions of what the old apartheid bantustans were- Most of the masses in the ex-bantustan areas are starving, dying of hunger, the land is exhausted, the crops have collapsed, the livestock are dying off. These provinces are still cheap labour reserves- the ANC government has seen to that.

9 out of every 10 empowerment farms are collapsing- this is because water rights, fertilizer, seeds, farming equipment, access to markets are all controlled by monopolies. Yet the ANC government is unwilling to act against these monopolies and large commercial farms that are associated with them. In the days of apartheid, the commercial farms used to pay 2.5% interest to the Land Bank while everyone else had to pay 20% interest- in other words, public funds, that is the blood and sweat of generations of workers subsidised the white commercial farmers, the agro-monopolies and large retailers. The big commercial farmers did not even declare their crimes at the TRC. [Did the TRC even ask them?].

The question is: is there a hunger for land or just simply hunger? Already agriculture in SA is very highly mechanised. For example there are only 2 companies that are producing the pasta for the whole of the country. The only reason why grapes and fruit farming is not as mechanised yet is due to the production process (try building a machine that recognises an unripe peach and a ripe one of more or less the same size- not so easy). 2 million farm workers have been retrenched since 1994, showing that mechanization is operating where possible, already. The farmers who are threatening mass dismissals and retrenchments are relying on making the remaining workers work harder- this is open for contestation by the working class. Already the share of the labour force involved in agriculture in SA is similar to the USA and EU, namely about 8%. Thus the weight of what peasantry or small farmers there are, is very small- 95% of food is produced by the commercial farmers- when we consider that 30% of wheat requirements are imported, then the small farmer is producing very little. Thus the land question is reduced to one of expropriation of all the commercial farms without compensation, setting up farm workers committees and for these committees to take over control of them, similarly workers committees in the transport, water, seeds, fertilizer, agro-processing (Tiger Brands, Pioneer, etc), the banks and large retailers, for workers control after expropriation without compensation. Within this framework then maximum assistance to the small farmer, with real assistance in scientific methods,



seeds, water, fertilizer, access to markets, but encouraging them to become incorporated voluntarily in the worker-controlled state farms in the future.

This is just an outline of work which we are preparing for a future proposed agrarian programme for the revolutionary working class party. Such a programme cannot be seen as separate from the struggle to overthrow the capitalist system and to establish Socialism.

Immediately, however, we propose some steps to consider when combatting the current mass dismissals on the farms and the threat of retrenchment, as well as some ideas for the way forward:

Immediate steps- a proposal

1.A campaign for the unionisation of all the commercial farms, setting up of workers committees to control elected worker leaders, subject to instant recall and with no privileges for being in leadership;

2.For immediate Department of Labour inspections of all commercial farms, starting with those who have dismissed workers and those who are threatening to retrench workers (this is possible because only 34% of farm workers are paid leave, only 64% have UIF deducted, about 60% have contracts, many have tax illegally deducted even though their earnings are below the tax threshold).

3.The setting up of health and safety committees that can take up the transport issues, exposure to hazardous chemicals, etc

4.Campaigning for an 8 hour day, without loss of pay, and a ban on overtime (this will help force the reinstatement of the dismissed workers as well as create more jobs for other workers)

5.A campaign for the farmers to open to their books to workers inspection so that workers can bring their own experts to check if the farmer has been engaging in tax avoidance (a widespread practice in SA, rest of Africa and internationally); the workers' experts can also check the scale of mislabelling of goods to pay less tax and smuggling value out of the country;

6.Workers in the cities to set up price committees to monitor major retailers opportunistically raising prices due to the wage raise. (retailers should be forced to absorb the slight extra cost due to a) many farm workers already earn more than R105; b) a study by Philip Martin of the lowest paid migrant workers in the USA showed that a 40% increase in the minimum wage of migrant farm workers resulted only in a 4% increase in certain food- considering that the prices of food in SA is set at international levels, in dollar terms, but farm workers here earn 7 times less than the lowest paid farmworker in the USA, the 50% increase in minimum wages should only result in a 0.5% increase in grapes and other fruit, something the retailer can easily absorb- let them open their books and justify their level of profit); retailers that refuse to absorb the cost and who continually raise prices should face a mass action campaign

7.Finally, last but not least, what prevents Cosatu, community organizations and other unions from filing to Nedlac for a regional and national strike against high food prices, against dismissals and for a R200 per day wage for farm workers, which should increase each time prices go up, demanding too that any farm that victimizes workers should be expropriated without compensation and placed under workers control.

<http://www.prb.org/Articles/2010/usfarmworkersfoodprices.aspx> (Farm workers wages and food costs- Philip Martin. 40% increase results in 4% increase in food price) ; see also Synthesis Paper- South Africa: Dr N Makgetla, March 2010

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Emerging farmer or submerging farmer?

in 1993 there were 63 000 commercial farmers, today there are 47 500. At the same time it is reported that there are 220 000 'emerging farmers'. WWF reports that 90% of empowerment deals on farms have failed. The 2011 report by Stats SA on the food security in SA shows that only 10 000 farmers, 0.5% of the total, actually live off sale of farming goods and services. 50% of farmers in rural areas list their main income as government grants, a further 24% have a main income from wages earned (ie they are really workers supplementing their income). These figures mean that even among the commercial farmers there has been a much greater concentration than the 47 500 farming units show. In De Doorns for example, the workers report that some farmers own 10- 17 farms.

How can new black farmers 'emerge' when the water rights, the seeds, the fertilizer, the best impliments, are all controlled by monopolies? The commercial farmers produce 95% of food needs in SA.

Do these figures not point to the need to nationalise the land, expropriating all the commercial farms, without compensation to the capitalists, placing them under workers control, expropriation without compensation, under workers control, of the main water rights, seed production, the fertilizer sector, equipment sector, the agro-producers like Tiger Brands, and all the main retailers?

How ironic that the legacy of Mandela and Slovo is the maintenance of control of food production in the hands of white capitalists and continued semi-slavery on the farms.

Are we wrong?

The Working Class, Housing and the brutalization of Capitalism.

An update on the life of the working class in the “new South Africa” with reference to East London.

A legacy of apartheid “homelands”, separate development, the group areas act and dehumanization “exists and is expanding” 18 years after the elections of the “new-looking but still capitalist” ruling class inclusive of the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance. Shocking, appalling and one is justified to say, treacherous. The dream the ANC founding fathers had in 1912 has been realized- which is all that matters. The fact that many “oppressed” as well as “oppressed and exploited”, were and still are, not supporters of the Stalinist alliance, is of no consequence- we were merely a means to an end. That is correct. We, of which the working class, were and still is a significant part, bore and still bears the brunt of the harsh realities of capitalism. The bourgeoisie have used religion, gender, culture or many other fictitious reasons to justify and legitimize bourgeois rule, (the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie).

As a fundamental piece of the “grand Apartheid blueprint”, the Group Areas Act, which enforced the physical separation of the “races” was primary. Moreover, the continued assault on the majority black working class would not only be sustained but also expanded and extended. Simultaneously, the distancing of the black working class from the means of production resulting in increased transport costs and travel time would serve as a barrier/safeguard for the capitalist class as well as making it virtually impossible for the working class to “save for a rainy day”. Thus, comrade worker is forced to return day after day- whether s/he likes it or not. A



combination of starvation wages and labor laws legislated under apartheid has not only been retained but worsened.

The black working class nuclear family- which assists bourgeois class rule- takes strain because it simply cannot function as such. The “migrant labor system” which keeps similar families totally separated for 49 weeks in a year. Single-sex hostels merely aggravate the situation. “Husbands and wives become strangers and black working class children don’t know their father or mother.”

In 1886 workers in Chicago, USA, embarked on industrial action to achieve an 8-hour workday or 40-hour workweek. Many workers in Europe even work 35-36 hours per week. However in South Africa, more than 18 years after “coming into power”, the ANC-led government has chosen not to amend this legislation so that the working class “who sacrificed and fought for the end of apartheid rule and a place in the sun in the peoples-government”, may also have a life outside work. No, it is not their inability but rather their conscious decision to suppress any attempt to improve the lives and the standard of living of the working class. We work a 9-hour day, equal to a 45-hour week, excluding more than 2 hours travel-time a day. We Leninist-Trotskyists have been warning against the former petit-bourgeois ANC who have promoted themselves to full bourgeois status- by betraying the working class and hopping into the bed of the capitalists. Unfortunately, most people refused to believe and accept this fact. The bourgeois-friendly, tripartite alliance, are accomplices in the super-exploitation and oppression of its members, the working class.

A day in the life of worker living in an “apartheid-location” more than 40km from work.

S/he has to rise by 3.30 in the morning to be at work by 6am. Very importantly, s/he may have to travel by train which costs a few rand less than the taxi fare. The petrol price has increased for the umpteenth time and is the reason why transport costs has sky-rocketed increasing the cost of all commodities. Unfortunately for the workers, under capitalism, this is not factored into the wages of which makes the use of public transport a traumatic experience.

Comrade worker has to wash, dress then rush to the railway station. Hopefully, s/he may only have to walk 30 minutes to the station. The working class is compelled to travel the 40km by train from the station of their apartheid location to the town/city nearest their workplace. Now the long walk, hopefully not more than an hour to the workplace still remains. Then the day’s work still lay ahead.

Let’s investigate the worker’s activities since finishing work the previous day at 6pm. Remember s/he has to walk for 30 minutes to the station then travel for 1.5 hours before the 30 minute walk home. Let us not forget that the brutality of this system makes us brutal as well. Tired comrade worker may also be confronted by gangsters who want to rob him and beat him up in the process or a woman comrade worker may be raped. Thus if cde worker is lucky not to be assaulted, s/he arrives home at 8.30pm, 17 hours since waking up. By now, the hunger pangs have set in and cde worker devours whatever is for serving. The only concern is being able to rise at 3.30am so that s/he can be on time for work the next day. In all likelihood, the kids are asleep as they were when cde worker left for work. N.B. The humiliation and abuse cde worker suffers at the hands of the capitalist and his representatives has not been taken into account. This is the reality of the working class under ANC-led government. When one considers the billions of rands allocated to housing each year it is clear this goes to a bureaucracy to build the least number of houses so millions will always be homeless. Trillions go for capitalist infrastructure such as coal power stations that are not needed, while there is no plan for decent housing for all. The houses built for the working class are what one expected from the “apartheid regime” and



are very far from workplaces in the “same apartheid location”. The conditions of pre-1994 S.A. prevails. It is only some of the black middle class who has experienced improvements in their lives. The vast majority -the black working class- continues to suffer at the hands of the capitalist class even though it now includes blacks who are probably members of the ANC. The time has come to oust our new oppressors and exploiters if we want suitable housing.

More and more squatter camps or informal settlements are springing up in any vacant piece of land or even in trees nearer the workplaces. Many a worker sleeps in the shack close to work and then goes ‘home’ for the weekend.

Forward to Socialism ; let us break from this Barbarism.

Workers of South Africa, Africa and the World unite to overthrow the capitalist system. All illusions of mercy and kindness from the capitalist-ANC must now be seen as just that, a dream, a lie. We need a revolutionary working class party that is international.

A capitalist is a capitalist even if they have their roots in the ANC or similar organization.

All the construction monopolies, the banks, the cement and clay corporates must be expropriated without compensation to the capitalists, and placed under workers control. For quality integrated housing, close to places of work, with low rental and exemptions for the unemployed, pensioners and low-waged.

While writing this article the price of petrol has increased...

The assault on the living conditions of the working class continues!!! 4.2.2013

Revolt in Groenpunt prison and beyond

Introduction

In order for the capitalist class to continue to exist it requires a mechanism which it as the ruling class can enforce its rule over the working class. The police, military, judicial, educational and penal systems are designed to protect the institutions of the capitalist class such as private and bourgeois ownership of the means of production.

Conditions in the prisons

Revolts broke out at the maximum Security unit of the prison in Deneysville in the Free State. The inmates were dissatisfied over food, lack of training and rehabilitation programmes. The prisoners demanded improved conditions in these areas.

Some of the prisons are overcrowded with poor ventilation and poor lighting. One of the factors leading to overcrowding is that many inmates are in for petty crime such as taking bread from the supermarkets because of hunger and unemployment.

According to the 2011-2012 annual report of the Independent Complaints Directorate, 932 people died in police custody or as a result of police ‘action’, in this period.



Recently a Nigerian worker, Obinna Chinatu Ujboaja, died in police custody, while over the last 2 years at least 4 Nigerians were killed by the police while behind bars. There are also several more incidents of police brutality towards Nigerians held in custody. Most of the cases are swept under the carpet because the mainstream media paints an image that all Nigerians are criminals. Several other immigrant workers are regularly targeted by the police. This is a mechanism of dividing the working class. Besides this, the state has several immigration prisons which are transit sites for expelling excess immigrant workers. The Lindela immigration prison is run by tenders by ANC cronies. This shows how the ANC elite lives off the scraps from the master's table (the capitalist class). Immigration prisons are set up to divide the working class and to keep immigrant workers permanently destabilised so that there is maximum competition among workers to drive wages to the lowest possible level.

In the USA, the world's biggest imperialist power has the most prisons and the highest percentage of the population are behind bars- this is to keep the working class from resisting against the capitalist system. This is because of the role of US imperialism plundering the working class of the world that the biggest capitalists of the world require to intimidate and keep the working class under control on home soil. The real gangsters are the capitalists who steal billions and trillions of dollars of wealth every year but they are not in prison, but a worker who takes a slice of bread from the supermarket shelves is in jail.

The way forward

We see that even the lumpen proletariat (petty gangster) and the jailed worker is starting to recognise that what is happening to them is inhuman, even their level of consciousness is rising- they see the class differences in society, they see the state as being on the side of the capitalists- in other words they see that the state is the enemy. Thus the prison revolts should be seen as part of the generalised process of revolt that has broken out since the Marikana uprising.

Prisons are part of the mechanism of the capitalist system that maintains inequality- it is part of the exploitation system that forces the working class to sell its labour power for slave wages in order to survive. In this capitalist democracy there is no rehabilitation in prisons nor real corrective programmes.

- All economic prisoners such as those who stole food from the supermarkets should be immediately released;
- Arrest the bosses of Anglo American and other capitalists
- Disband all the immigration prisons
- Expropriate the mines, banks, commercial farms, the entire food and construction industry, without compensation to the capitalists, under workers control, nationalise the land; special measures to support the small farmer. For farm worker collectives.
- For a centralised state retailer and distributor- expropriate Shoprite, Distell, Tiger Brands and others, without compensation to the capitalists, under workers control
- for private control of the Reserve bank to be abolished, all banks to be centralised into one central bank.

Conclusions

Workers of the world unite! We have a common enemy in world capitalism. This system is for the capitalist class (the rich); we the working class must unite to fight this system, to get rid of it; we need a revolutionary working class party, nationally, internationally.

Forward to Socialism! 26.1.2013



Internationale

Words by Eugene Pottier (Paris 1871) Music by Pierre Degeyter (1888)

**Arise ye workers from your slumbers
Arise ye prisoners of want
For reason in revolt now thunders
And at last ends the age of cant.
Away with all your superstitions
Servile masses arise, arise
We'll change henceforth the old tradition
And spurn the dust to win the prize.**

**So comrades, come rally
And the last fight let us face
The Internationale unites the human race.
So comrades, come rally
And the last fight let us face
The Internationale unites the human race.**

**No saviour from on high delivers
No faith have we in prince or peer
Our own right hand the chains must shiver
Chains of hatred, greed and fear
E'er the thieves will out with their booty
And give to all a happier lot.
Each at the forge must do their duty
And we'll strike while the iron is hot.**

The Internationale was written to celebrate the Paris Commune of March-May 1871: the first time workers took state power into their own hands. Representatives were mandated on policy questions by their electors, they were recallable at any time and were paid wages that reflected those of their constituents. The distinction between legislative and executive arms of government was abolished.



The Spark

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